(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a fact that these units are already in profit and so, what are the specific reasons for privatising them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. There is no proposal for privatising Railways' Production Units. These units are run on cost basis and no profit is charged on their products, which are mainly for in-house consumption.

Agreement with KFW for Signalling Equipment

3768. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways had signed a loan agreement with KFW, Germany in August, 1997 for signalling equipment but the project element have still not been finalized;

(b) whether it is in violation of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance;

(c) how much Commitment charges have been paid by Government so far due to non-utilisation of the loan; and

(d) whether it is proposed to take action against the officials responsible for the lapse in this case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir. A Loan Agreement has been signed by the Government of India (in the Ministry of Finance) and Kreditanstalt for Wiederafbau (KFW), Germany on 1st August, 1997 for financing a project of Modernization of Signalling between Delhi and Kanpur. After a review of the project components, the Railways have proposed certain modifications in the project scope including technological options, and an expert study to go into related issues has since been commissioned.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No commitment charges have yet been paid by the Government against this loan. However, the Loan Agreement provides for payment of commitment

charge of 0.25% per annum on the undisbursed loan amount, the first payment becoming due together with the first interest payment.

(d) No, Sir. No individual official is considered responsible as the delay in drawal of the loan has been occasioned by a review of the scope of the project keeping in view the operational constraints of the Indian Railways and also the technological advances in recents times.

Sleeper Class Reservation from New Jalpaiguri

3769. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sleeper class passengers cannot board in North East Express bound for Delhi from Jalpaiguri station;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Army and para-military personnels are forced to board in sleeper classes without any reservation, from N.J.P.; and

(c) whether Government would arrange one extra Military coach from N.J.P.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No such complaint has been received.

(c) One General Second Class coach is exclusively earmarked by North East Express for Defence Personnel. Moreover, Railways always provide high priority to the movement of Defence personnel and Coaches/Wagons are immediately arranged for Defence related requirements.

Bring down the Expenditure incurred on Railway Operations

†3770. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain possibilities have been explored by Government to bring down the expenditure to be incurred on railway operations;

(b) if so, the percentage of expenditure expected to be brought down with regard to the present railway operations expenditure; and

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

1741\RSVF-9A